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Sent: Thur 8/18/2011 8:42:11 PM
Subject: Fw: Anchorage Daily News: Anti-Pebble ads fail the geography test
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"To protect your rivers, protect your mountains."
----- Forwarded by Phil North/R10/USEPA/US on 08/18/2011 12:41 PM -----

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<http://www.adn.com/2011/08/17/2019836/anti-pebble-ads-fail-the-geography.html>

Anti-Pebble ads fail the geography test
COMPASS:Other points of view

By ORIN SEYBERT

(08/17/11 20:16:13)

I would be the last person in the world to jeopardize the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon fishery, the largest wild salmon fishery in existence. I started fishing in the Ugashik River in 1950 and made the money to buy my first aircraft, then start my airline, which of course grew to be successful supporting the fisheries industry. To this day, my children and grandchildren rely on Bristol Bay to help with their livelihood, as well as their subsistence needs.

However, the latest TV campaign by the anti-Pebble group is ludicrous. They are using a half-dozen residents of the Chignik/Perryville area (of which some are my relatives) to speak against the mine, as if they are Bristol Bay residents.

Look at a map. The Chignik area is on the Pacific Ocean side of the Alaska Peninsula, nearly 1,000 miles from Bristol Bay by water. The Chignik Lake sockeye fishery is the second largest in the state, next to Bristol Bay. It is much more similar to, but larger than, the Copper River, Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island producers, which are all at least in the same ocean.

As anyone familiar with the sockeye salmon life cycle knows, they are hatched in early spring and spend the first year growing to smolt in those streams and lakes. Then they go out to sea, spend two or three years growing, then return to their point of origin to spawn.

The runs always return to their place of origination to start the cycle all over again. Thus there is no way

any disaster in Bristol Bay could affect the Chignik runs, and vice versa.

Let us look at the facts. Apparently there are very large, valuable mineral deposits in the hills west of Iliamna. In a worst case scenario, such as a dam failure or ongoing leakage of toxic material, there could possibly be two systems affected, Talarik Creek on the Lake Iliamna side, and the Mulchatna River on the Nushagak side.

Both of these streams together support only a very small percentage of the total run spawning. The vast majority of the Nushagak run goes up the Nushagak and Wood Rivers to the Aleknagik/Tikchik lakes systems, and the vast majority of the Kvichak run goes to the East and North parts of Iliamna Lake, as well as Lake Clark. And of course the Naknek, Egegik and Ugashik systems are even more removed. It is unthinkable that any major disaster in one small area of the watershed would impact the entire run.

As an example, Bristol Bay has already survived two major volcanic impacts. The first was the Katmai eruption of 1912, which sent many tons of toxic ash down the Savonoski River into Naknek Lake and the Naknek River, which today is the second- or third-largest run in Bristol Bay. Then there was an eruption just six years ago of Mount Chiginagak, which sent material down Volcano Creek into Mother Goose Lake, Painter Creek and the King Salmon River (Ugashik), shutting down several sport fishing lodges for a few years. Those runs are already coming back.

There is information available that shows only 17 percent of Bristol Bay permits are held by bona fide year-round area residents. The rest are held by non-residents who live in the continental U.S. or people with Bristol Bay roots who do not live there but only come for the two months to get their share. It appears that the large amount of money spent by the anti-Pebble group is mostly funded by outside and self-serving interests.

I am neither pro or anti-Pebble; they have a long ways to go. First we would like to see their plan of production, which has not been done yet. Then they have to go through extensive local, state and federal permitting processes, which will all be subject to public review and input. We should at least give them a chance.

Finally, if the anti-Pebble group cannot even get the obvious facts straight, how are we supposed to trust the rest of their advertising?

Orin Seybert is the founder and retired CEO of Peninsula Airways (PenAir). He lives in Anchorage.

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